

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 RSC-01 DRC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-13 DPW-01 NEA-10 /155 W

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R 201358Z SEPT 73

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3325

UNCLAS PARIS 24688

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, VS

SUBJECT: REUTERS INTERVIEW WITH BAO DAI

REF: STATE 186346

FOLLOWING SENT SAIGON SEPTEMBER 19 REPEATED TO YOU FOR ACTION
QUOTE:

REF: SAIGON 16418

PER PARA 5 REFTTEL, FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF REUTERS

DISPATCH: 1623: INDOCHINA - EMPEROR:

BY GILBERT SEDBORN.

PARIS, SEPT. 12, REUTER -- BAO DAI, THE SELF-EXILED
VIETNAMESE EMPEROR TODAY CUT SHORT RUMORS CIRCULATING IN
SAIGON THAT HE EXPECTS TO RETURN TO VIETNAM NEXT MONTH
AND EXPRESSED BACKING FOR PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU.

THAT IS UTTER NONSENSE, HE TOLD REUTER. I HAVE HEARD OF
SUCH RUMOURS THROUGH THE NEWSPAPERS. BUT I CAN TELL YOU THAT
I HAVE NO SUCH PLANS FOR THE TIME BEING.

BAO DAI, THE LAST CROWNED MONARCH IN VIETNAM WHO NOW LIVES
IN FRANCE, ADDED: I HAVE LONG APPEALED TO ALL THE VIETNAMESE
PEOPLE TO JOIN FORCES IN A NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND HELP
REBUILD VIETNAM.

IN SAIGON TODAY WE HAVE A RESPONSIBLE LEADER -- PRESIDENT
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NGUYEN VAN THIEU. ALL VIETNAMESE ARE DUTY BOUND TO HELP HIM IN HIS TASKS. WE MUST DO NOTHING TO IMPEDE HIS WORK, HE SAID.

THE 59-YEAR-OLD FORMER EMPEROR, WHO REIGNED FOR 20 YEARS AS EMPEROR OF ANNAM UNTIL HE WAS DEPOSED BY COMMUNIST FORCES IN 1945, RETURNED TO VIETNAM AS HEAD OF STATE FROM 1949, UNTIL FRENCH RULE ENDED IN 1955 AND HE WAS FORCED OUT BY PRESIDENT NGO DINH DIEM.

BAO DAI, WHOSE MOTHER STILL LIVES IN HUE, THE OLD IMPERIAL CAPITAL, SAID: I AM AWARE THAT CERTAIN SAIGON NEWSPAPERS ARE ACTIVELY CAMPAIGNING FOR MY RETURN HOME. BUT I CAN TELL YOU THAT REPORTS THAT I EXPECT TO RETURN TO VIETNAM NEXT MONTH OR EVEN LATER THIS YEAR HAVE COME ALTOGETHER AS A SURPRISE TO ME. HE ADDED: NO ONE IN SOUTH VIETNAM HAS THE RIGHT TO SPEAK ON MY BEHALF OR TO CLAIM THAT HE IS IN ANY WAY DIRECTLY CONNECTED WITH ME.

BAO DAI SAID HE WAS FOLLOWING EVENTS AT HOME VERY CLOSELY. I DID NOT UNDERTAKE A VOYAGE THROUGH SOUTH-EAST ASIA FOR NOTHING EARLIER THIS YEAR, HE ADDED.

THE EX-EMPEROR VISITED HONG KONG AND JAPAN THIS SPRING TO KEEP UP WITH ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA AND SEE HOW HIS COUNTRY CAN CATCH UP WITH THAT PART OF THE WORLD.

HE SPENT FOUR MONTHS TOURING VARIOUS COUNTRIES IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA, BUT CLAIMED THAT HE HAD NO CONTACTS WITH SOUTH VIETNAMESE LEADERS.

COMMENTING ON REPORTS THAT HE WAS NOW FREE TO RETURN HOME AS AN ORDINARY CITIZEN TO LEAD THE COUNTRY'S THIRD FORCE ON THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF RECONCILIATION AND CONCORD, BAO DAI SAID: I HAVE NO SUCH PLANS. I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT ANYBODY AND EVERYBODY CAN LEAD THE SO-CALLED THIRD FORCE...I AM NOT INTERESTED.

BUT I WANT TO WARN MY COUNTRYMEN THAT THEY MUST UNITE RATHER THAN DISPERSE THEIR EFFORTS AND ALLOW PRESIDENT THIEU TO CARRY ON WITH HIS TASK OF LEADING THE NATION IN THE PRESENT DIFFICULT TIMES. OTHERWISE, WE WOULD BE PLAYING IN THE HANDS OF THE COMMUNIST FORCES, HE ADDED.

BORN NGUYEN PHUOC VINH THUY, HE TOOK THE ROYAL TITLE BAO DAI WHEN HE WAS ENTHRONED IN 1932.

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ON JULY 11, 1972, BAO DAI APPEALED TO THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE TO JOIN IN NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND HELP REBUILD VIETNAM.

IN ONE OF HIS RARE PUBLIC STATEMENTS SINCE HIS OUSTING, THE EX-EMPEROR SAID: THE TIME HAS COME TO PUT AN END TO A FRATRICIDAL WAR AND ENABLE OUR PEOPLE TO TEND TO THEIR WOUNDS AND SUFFERINGS

AND TO RECOVER AT LAST PEACE IN CONCORD.

HE SENT HIS APPEAL TO PRESIDENT TON DUC THANG OF
NORTH VIETNAM AND PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU OF
SOUTH VIETNAM.

I STAND BY THAT APPEAL, BAO DAI SAID TODAY. FUTURE
EVENTS WILL DICTATE MY NEXT MOVES.IRWIN
UNQUOTEIRWIN

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** UNCLASSIFIED

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 SEP 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973PARIS24688
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730961/aaaajzwd.tel
Line Count: 126
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: STATE 186346
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06-Aug-2001 by reddocgw>; APPROVED <22-Aug-2001 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> mcm 980313
Subject: REUTERS INTERVIEW WITH BAO DAI
TAGS: PINT, VS, PINT
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005